



## Tree Management Policy

This policy is supplemental to, and does not in any way override, the Parish Council standing orders and/or Financial Regulations.

This policy was adopted by the full parish council at its meeting on 8 September 2025 (minute 25.60.1).

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out how Elton Parish Council will manage trees and hedges on land that it owns.

1.2 This policy has been created to ensure a clear and consistent approach to the management of trees by the Parish Council.

1.3 The policy outlines the proactive approach that the Parish Council will take to conserve and enhance the tree population at the Parish Field, Community Centre Car Park and the area on Ince Lane known as Greenbank.

1.4 The publication “Common sense risk management of trees” produced by the National Tree Safety Group in 2024 has been used as a source of guidance to inform this policy.

### 2. The Legal Framework

2.1 In both civil and criminal law, an owner of land on which a tree stands has responsibilities for the health and safety of those on or near the land and has potential liabilities arising from the falling of a tree or branch.

2.2 The owner of land on which a tree stands owes a duty of care in common law, to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that could cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or property.

### 3. The principles underpinning the policy

3.1 Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society.

3.2 Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall.

3.3 The overall risk to the public is extremely low.

3.4 The owners of trees have a legal duty of care.

3.5 A balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management should be taken.

### 4. The approach

4.1 Trees will be assigned a zone according to the risk they pose to property and people should they fail or lose branches.

4.2 The zoning of a tree will determine the level and frequency of inspection undertaken.

4.3 The zoning of a tree combined with inspection findings will inform decisions on tree

maintenance procedures.

4.4 Notwithstanding the above, any potential risk posed by a tree that is reported to the Parish Council will be inspected and proportionate remedies will be applied.

## **5. Zoning**

5.1 This is a practice whereby areas of land are identified according to use. This practice identifies high frequency and low frequency use and contributes to a cost effective means of tree inspection by focusing resources where most needed.

5.2 A high frequency use zone is an area that is frequently visited by members of the public, close to occupied properties or close to frequently used highways and pathways, where the failure of a tree or branches from a tree would cause most damage to people or property or disruption to normal activities.

5.3 A low frequency use zone is an area that is not frequently visited by the public or some distance from properties, highways and footpaths, where the failure of a tree or branches from a tree would not cause much damage to property or people or disruption to normal activities.

5.4 All trees within the parish are in high frequency use zones.

## **6. Inspections**

6.1 Initially, the zone of a tree will determine what level of inspection and what frequency of inspection a tree is subject to.

6.2 An informal inspection is a visual inspection from the ground undertaken on a day-to-day basis by a number of people, including members of the public, parish employees and councillors. Unless something of concern was noted, this inspection would not be formally recorded.

6.3 A formal inspection is a visual inspection from the ground focussed on individually identified trees, including a close inspection of aspects of the tree such as noting of any growth around the tree, on the trunk, the condition of the bark and a general assessment of the canopy. This inspection can be undertaken by a non-tree specialist with a general knowledge of trees. This inspection should take place at specified intervals and be formally recorded.

6.4 A detailed formal inspection of individually identified trees, undertaken by a qualified person at regular stated intervals, those intervals aligned to the zone ascribed to the tree and any other factors of note, such as a known species threatened by disease, e.g. ash trees from ash-die back.

6.5 Trees in the ownership of the Parish Council will be subject to frequent informal inspections, bi-annual formal inspections (winter and summer) and at least 3 yearly detailed formal inspections by a qualified tree surgeon/arborist.

6.6 Notwithstanding the descriptions above, if a tree were notified as posing a real and immediate danger, a detailed, formal inspection would be scheduled.

## **7. Work undertaken on trees**

7.1 The overarching principle that trees are living organisms and should be allowed to complete their natural lifecycle with minimal management interventions will be applied to tree on Parish Council land.

7.2 Sufficient resources will be allocated to ensure that the Parish Council is able to manage the trees that it owns.

7.3 Work will be undertaken where an inspection has identified the tree as potentially hazardous or an immediate danger.

- 7.4 Work will be undertaken where it is vital to the tree's long-term survival. Dead, dying or diseased trees will only be fully removed when there is no other option.
- 7.5 Work will be undertaken where there is deemed to be significant risk to property.
- 7.6 Work will be undertaken to comply with the Highways Act 1980 Section 154.
- 7.7 Work will be undertaken to prolong life or promote development of good tree structure, such as pollarding and crown lifting.
- 7.8 Work will not be undertaken in response to natural occurrences that do not pose a health and safety risk, such as falling nuts, bird droppings, falling leaves, or sap exudation.
- 7.9 Work will not be undertaken for reasons of light or loss of view, except where street lighting is obscured.
- 7.10 Work will not be undertaken where trees have a negative impact on television or satellite reception unless complainants have taken other measures to improve reception without success and it can be proven that pruning will improve reception.
- 7.11 Work will not be undertaken during the nesting season (March to August), unless the work is for urgent health and safety reasons.
- 7.12 Work will not be undertaken if a tree contains roosting bats. If work is required for health and safety reasons, the advice of Natural England will be sought.
- 7.13 All tree work will be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon appointed by the Parish Council and in accordance with BS/3998/2010 Recommendations for Tree Work 2010 (and any subsequent revisions).

## **8. Recording**

- 8.1 A location map identifying significant tree by species will be kept up-to-date.
- 8.2 A database of formal tree inspections will be kept up-to-date.
- 8.3 All tree surgeon reports, recommendations and invoices will be retained.
- 8.4 Reports received from members of the public will be retained.

## **9. Monitoring and Review of policy**

- 9.1 The Parish Council delegates the responsibility for the monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy to its officers.
- 9.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or if any change in circumstances or the law requires an earlier review.